

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 480

AMEMBASSY TOKYO JA

INFO COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA

ZEN /COMFLEACT SASEBO JA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, TGEN, JA

SUBJ: REPAIR AND HOMPORTING OF MUTSU AT SASEBO

SUMMARY: ONE OF THE MOST COMPLICATED POLITICAL ISSUES IN KYUSHU HAS BEEN REPAIR OF AND HOMEPORTING OF MUTSU IN SASEBO, WHICH ITSELF IS TIED TO OTHER ISSUES SUCH AS THE REDUCTION OF FLEACTS, SASEBO, ANTI-NUCLEAR SENTIMENT IN WESTERN JAPAN, AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF MILLION TON DRY DOCK. MAYOR TSUJI, WHO FIRST BROCHED ISSUE IN JUNE, HAS TAKEN LINE THAT SASEBO SHOULD BE HOME PORT AND HAS DONE HIS BEST TO SEE THAT CITY IS SO DESIGNATED. OPPOSITION, PARTICULARLY JSP AND KOMEITO, HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY

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VOCAL IN OPPOSING MOVE. RECENT POLL PUBLISHED IN LOCAL EDITION OF YOMIURI SHOWS THAT MAJORITY OF PEOPLE OPPOSE HOMEPORTING BUT STILL SUPPORT TSUJI. GIVEN MAYOR'S SKILL IN MANIPULATING VARIOUS FACTIONS, WE FEEL THAT BE IF SASEBO IS NAMED HOME PORT, WHICH SEEMS LIKELY, TSUJI WILL KEEP POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS TO MINIMUM. END SUMMARY.

CONSULATE HAS REPORTED VARIOUS PROBLEMS INVOLVING NUCLEAR POWER IN KYUSHU, PARTICULARLY OPPOSITION TO KYUSHU ELECTRIC'S

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PROPOSED PLANT AT SENDAI, KAGOSHIMA PREFECTURE, AND RECENT

LEAK AT KYUDEN'S GENKAI NUCLEAR POWER PLANT IN SAGA PREFECTURE ONLY DAYS AFTER IT STARTED OPERATION. ISSUE OF REPAIR FACILITY AND EVENTUAL HOMEPORT FOR BELAGUERED MUTSU HAS BEEN SIMMERING ALONG SINCE MID-JUNE, WHEN SASEBO MAYOR ICHIZO TSUJI DISCLOSED THAT HE HAD BEEN SOUNDED OUT ON POLLIBILITY OF SASEBO BECOMING HOME PORT MOTH EARLIET. TSUJI THREW CITY AND PREFECTURE INTO UPROAR BY BLANDLY DECLARING THAT HOMEPORTING MIGHT NOT BE BAD IDEA. ONCE SAFETY MEASURES TAKEN, NO REASON NOT TO DO SO, HE SAID, ADDING THAT EMOTION SHOULD PLAY NO PART IN EVENTUAL DECISION. NAGASAKI GOVENOR KANICHI KUBO, WHO, LIKE TSUJI, IS A CONSERVATIVE,

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IMMEDIATELY TOLD PRESS THAT TSUJI HAD NOT DISCUSSED ISSUE WITH HIM, ADDING RATHER PLAINTIVELY THAT HE HOPED MAYOR WOULD DO SO WHEN HE RETURNED FROM TOKYO. KUBO SAID THAT AS GOVERNOR OF PREFECTURE WHICH HAD SUFFERED NUCLEAR BOMBARDMENT, HE WAS ABSOLUTELY OPPOSED TO HOMEPORTING OF MUTSU IN SASEBO (OR TSUSHIMA, ANOTHER PROPECTIVE SITE ALSO IN NAGASAKI PREFECTURE) UNLESS SAFETY ASSURED. OTHER OPPOSITION FORECES IMMEDIATELY SWUNG INTO ACTION, AND DELEGATION OF JSP AND KOMEITO CITY ASSEMBLYMEN CALLED ON TSUJI TO SEEK CLARIFICATION AND PROTEST MAYOR'S STATEMENT. OVER THOUSAND FISHERMEN RALLED IN SASEBO IN PROTEST. TSUJI STUCK TO HIS GUNS, HOWEVER. HE REAFFIRMED NECESSITY OF EVENTUAL USE OF ATOMIC POWER, AND ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES FOR SASEBO WERE MENTIONED FREQUENTLY AS PLUSSES OF MUTSU HOMEPORTING. SASEBO HEAVY INDUSTRIES (SSK) IS MAJOR EMPLOYER IN CITY, AND, WITH RECENT LAYOFFS BY FLEET ACTIVITIES AND REDUCTION OF U. S. NAVY BUSINESS, CITY AND SSK VERY ACTIVELY SEEKING REPLACEMENT BUSINESS. ALTHOUGH SASEBO MANAGER OF SSK TELLS US THAT COMPANY STILL PLANS TO BUILD ONE MILLION TON DRYDOCK, WHICH WAS PRINCIPAL RATIONALE FOR SAKIBE REVERSION, HE ADMITS THEY WILL

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BE DELAYED, AND, GIVEN STATE OF JAPANESE SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRY, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WE WILL BELIEVE CONSTRUCTION WHEN WE SEE IT. ISSUE FUTHER CLUDED BY STATEMENT OF DIRECTOR GENERAL OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AGENCY SASAKI, WHO SAID ON AUGUST 8 THAT SASEBO LOOKED LIKE A GOOD CANDIDATE FOR REPAIR BUT THAT IT WAS NOT YET DECIDED. ACCORDING TO PAPERS, TSUJI CLAIMED HE HAD NOT BEEN CONSULTED AND SAID IT WAS ODD GOVERMENT WOULD APPARENTLY TRY TO MAKE UNILATERAL DECISION. CHIEF OF HIS SECRETARIAT SECTION TOLD US AUGUST 12 THAT MAYOR RATHER

UPSET BY SASAKI'S STATEMENT, AND FEELS IT,ALONG WITH
NEWSPATER PLAY GIVEN LA ROQUE TESTIMONT AND DR. TAMPLIN'S
TRIP TO KYUSHU, WILL MAKE IT HARDER TO GAIN UNDERSTANDING OF
SASEBO RESEDENTS. OUR SOURCE WENT ON, HOWEVER, THAT TSUJI
STILL VERY MUCH IN FAVOR OF REPAIR AND HOMPORTING OF MUTSU IN
SASEBO.

IN RECENT POLL CONDUCTED BY YOMIURI SHIMBUN IN SASEBO AMONG 605
RESPONDENTS, NUMBER OF FACTORS EMERGED. FOR EXAMPLE, TO
QUESTION OF "ARE YOU IN FAVOR OF PEACEFUL USE OF ATOMIC POWER?"
ALMOST EXACTY HALF (49.3 PERCENT) SAID YES. HOWEVER TO

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QUESTION"ARE YOU FOR OR AGAINST REPAIR OF MITSU IN SASEBO?"
ONLY 35.5 PERCENT FAVORD WERE IN FAVOR, WHILE 42.3 PERCENT
WERE ACTIVELY OPPOSED AND 22.2 PERCENT SAID THEY HAD NO OPINION.
DANGER WAS THE REASON MOST RESPONDENTS GAVE, ALONG WITH
PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT ON NAGASAKI RESEDENTS, AND FEAR THAT IT
WOULD EVENTUALLY LEAD TO HOMEPORTING.
PLURALITY ALSO AGAINST HOMEPORTING OF MUTSU, 40.2 PERCENT TO
36.4 PERCENT IN FAVOR. ON THE OTHER HAND, 49.3 PERCENT OF
THE RESPONDENTS SAID HOMEPORTING WOULD RESULT IN ECONOMIC GAINS
FOR SASEBO WHILE ONLY 26.3 PERCENT DOUBTED THIS.
INSPIE OF OPPOSITION TO MUTSU, 46.6 PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS
SAID THE FAVORED MAYOR TSUJI'S ADMINSTRATION IN GENERAL,
WHILE ONLY 26.8 OPPOSED IT. FINALLY, 40.2 SAID THEY SUPPORTED
LDP, AGAINST 18.8 FOR JSP AND MERE HANDFULL FOR OTHER PARTIES.
COMMENT: ALTHORGH CERTAIN ASPECT OF POLL APPEAR
MUTUALLY CONTRADICTRY AND LEAVE US SOMEWHAT PUZZLED, IT SEEMS
TO INDICAERD THAT EITHER NUCLEAR ISSUE (EXCEPT FOR FAIRLY
LARGE NUMBER OF DIE-HARDS) NOT OVERRIDING IN SASEBO, OR AT
LEAST NOT ENOUGH TO HURT TSUJI'S SUPPORT TO SIGNIFICANT
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DEGREE. ALSO , TSUJI IS VERY SKILLFUL AT PLAYING OFF VAIIOUS
PARTIES INVOLVED TO GET WHAT HE WANTS. AS EMBASSY AWARE, DURING

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SAKIBE REVERSION, TSUJI DID MASTERFUL JOB WITH COMNAVFORJAPAN
EMBASSY, SSK AND DFAA, MAKING ROUNDS FROM ONE TO ANOTHER,
ALWAYS REPRESENTING PREVIOUS CONTACT'S POSITION AS BEING SLIGHTLY
IN ADVANCE OF WHAT IT IN FACT WAS. GIVEN POOR ECONOMIC
CONDITION AT SSK AND MAYOR'S SKILL AT MANIPULATION, IT SEEMS
LIKELY THAT IF SASEBO DOES IN FACT, BECOME HOMEPORT, TSUJI WILL
SEE THAT CITY GETS MAXIMUM ECONIMIC ADVANTAGE AND WILL KEEP
OPPOSITION TO MUTSU AND HIMSELF TO MINIMUM.

RICHARDSON

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